

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

NATIONAL SERVICE A STRATEGIC NECESSITY

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ABSTRACT

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The success of the all volunteer force (AVF), since its inception in 1973, at fighting America's wars has truly been outstanding. The current administration and the leadership at the DoD are adamant in their support of the AVF for supplying the manpower for now and into the future. While the transition to this force has been successful in meeting current manpower requirements for the Department of Defense, has this smaller AVF eroded the military's support base in American culture and society? This paper will examine some of the possible negative affects of the current AVF as it relates to the following: 1) Has the smaller AVF created a culture gap between our military and civilian society? 2) Does this culture gap affect our Nation's will to meet future manpower needs? The intent of this paper is to address the possible ramifications of this culture gap and its overall affect on our society's willingness to supply the Army's manpower needs. This assessment shall look at National Service as a possible solution for creating a positive American culture that could generate and sustain the Nation's will to support the military's manpower requirements.

NATIONAL SERVICE A STRATEGIC NECESSITY

The success of the all volunteer force (AVF), since its inception in 1973, in fighting America's wars has truly been outstanding. The AVF has indeed proven itself to be a highly qualified and motivated military force that can perform in a professional manner under a great range of circumstances and requirements. The current administration and the leadership at the Department of Defense (DoD) are adamant in their support of the AVF for supplying the army's current and future needs. Two key strategic questions for American military leaders are what long term impact has the (AVF) policy had on creating a culture gap between the military and civilian society and does this culture gap affect our Nation's will to meet future military manpower requirements. It is extremely important that military leaders analyze this issue in depth to ensure that the current AVF policy does not adversely affect the military's ability to provide the man-power needed to ensure the national security of this country.

The recruiting process of the services has been well designed, financed, and implemented in order to meet AVF recruiting objectives and the military services end strength. The transformation to this force has been successful in meeting the current manpower requirements for the Department of Defense (DoD), but has this smaller AVF eroded the military's support base in American culture and society? This paper will not contest that success, but will examine some of the possible negative effects of the current AVF as it relates to the following: 1) Has the smaller AVF created a culture gap between our military and civilian society? 2) Does this culture gap affect our Nation's will to meet future manpower needs?

The intent of this paper is to address the possible ramifications of this cultural gap and its overall effect on our society's willingness to supply the Army's manpower needs. This assessment shall look at National Service as a possible solution for creating a positive American culture that may generate and sustain the Nation's will to support the military's manpower requirements.

National Service

National service is usually addressed and editorialized in two very distinct realms, which consist of military and civilian service. This paper will provide some background on both service programs. The main effort will be to evaluate voluntary and mandatory military service programs as well as their impact on building or reducing a culture gap between the military and civilian culture. The recommended solution to this gap will, however, entail a combination of both mandatory military and civilian national service programs.

Civilian National Service Programs

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was the first national service program introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his famous New Deal Program. It was organized in April of 1953, by authorization of Congress, under the title of "Emergency Conservation Work." This program provided employment to young unmarried men between the ages of 17 and 28. These men earned a salary of \$30.00 a month and most of that was sent home to families. Their jobs were in the forest service, on military and Indian reservations, and in parks. The CCC program was good for enrollees, the National Park Service, and for the Nation.¹

President John F. Kennedy furthered the idea of a voluntary national program when he established the Peace Corps in 1961. He challenged Americans to "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." This strong spirit of citizenship inspired the Peace Corps. Today, Peace Corps volunteers connect America with the world through peaceful service efforts, such as building schools to promote literacy, helping farmers provide food for the hungry, and setting up hospitals to care for the sick. After returning from overseas [they] put their knowledge to work at home, building America for the better.²

There have been at least two other major programs introduced at the National level. Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) was also established in the 1960s. This organization was developed to help low-income citizens and communities mobilize efforts to address their challenges. One such effort was to engage older Americans into service and thus the National Senior Service Corps was developed. President Bill Clinton continued the national service theme by establishing AmeriCorps in 1993 as the domestic Peace Corps. Its four main goals were to: 1) strengthen communities, 2) encouraging responsibility, 3) expanding opportunities for members and 4) getting critical needs done. The amended National and Community Service Act of 1995 launched a number of new national service programs: AmeriCorps*Direct, AmeriCorps*States, Tribes and Territories, and Learn & Service America. AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that provide a service through 3,000 nonprofit, public agents and faith base organizations which mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, and help communities respond to disasters.

More recently, in 2002, President George W. Bush unveiled USA Freedom Corps, a national service initiative with the focus of encouraging American community service and volunteerism. At the forefront of Freedom Corps is Citizen Corps, an agency designed to promote homeland security at the local level and prepare communities against the threat of terrorism. The new service program would expand crime-prevention and neighborhood watch programs, train communities in local disaster and emergency preparedness. It would also

provide volunteer opportunities at local police, fire, and public health agencies. President Bush's national service agenda likewise significantly expands established volunteer programs such as the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.³

All of these programs have challenged young Americans to step out of their comfort zone and take the initiative to serve their country. The experience and lessons learned by these participants have strengthened relationships among diverse cultures, socio-economic groups, and communities.

Voluntary National Military Service

The transition to the all volunteer force "culminated in April 1970 when President Richard Nixon formally announced his program to phase out the draft over a two-year period ending in 1973."⁴ The creation of the AVF required the Army to develop programs and incentives that would meet enlistment and retention goals. "The all-volunteer Army would be achieved by simultaneous action along three fronts: the development of incentives designed to attract new recruits; the improvement of service attractiveness and adoption of new recruitment practices aimed at informing prospective volunteers about the "new" Army."⁵ It is important to note that some military leaders understood the need for changes within the military even if the draft was continued. "Montagues's experience at Fort Carson convinced him that changes in lifestyle could make the Army more attractive to volunteers and, moreover were necessary even if the draft was retained.⁶ The realization that there was a need to develop innovative programs to recruit and retain soldiers has truly been the hallmark of the AVF program.

Mandatory Military National Service (Draft)

In order to meet manpower requirements for the Civil War, the Union initiated the Militia Act of 1862 that chartered a military draft to be administered by the states. The first true U.S. national draft was enacted as the Enrollment Act of 3 March 1863.⁷ This act was not well received because of numerous exemptions that kept many off of the conscription roles. Conversely, "The conscription legislation for World War I,...sought to avoid the most serious problems of the Civil War...The result, the Selective Service Act of 18 May 1917, proved a major success."⁸

The draft policy for World War II (WWII) provided a good example of a mandatory military service policy that helped build and integrate the military and civilian culture. Charles Moskos, a professor of sociology at Northwestern University, sites in a recent article, "We tend to forget that the more equitable draft that existed during World War II and for 20 years afterwards helped bring the country together. This shared experience [individuals with different background and

...races] helped instill in those who served, as in the national culture generally, a sense of unity and moral seriousness that we would not see again---until after September 11, 2001.”⁹ The service men and women returning from WWII permeated all levels of our society. This permeation provided a positive influence and attitude toward military issues and service. It is important to note that even a short duration of military service can lay the background for this support. “Surveys show that most former draftees look back on their time in the service with fondness and pride.”¹⁰ This vital link, a common experience in military service within our society, will provide the military with a positive and supportive civilian culture. This positive civilian outlook better supports and promotes understanding of the issues involved with committing the military to war and the manpower needs for that commitment.

As a young person growing up in a small rural community of about 1,500 people in southeastern South Dakota, I witnessed a steady decline of military experience within the community. This decline has persisted among business leaders and local society as a whole from the 1950s through 2005. After WWII, individuals with military experience could be found among the business owners on Main Street and in the community. I was keenly aware of the military experience of these individuals because my father, a WWII veteran, was a member of the local American Legion, a local National Guard Unit commander, and a business owner. These veterans started the local National Guard unit within that community and were, therefore, very visible in the community. The veterans in this local community not only proactively joined the newly established National Guard unit, but they also lead efforts to recruit their friends and relatives into that unit.

I joined the National Guard in this community in the late 1970s. At that time, the personal military experience of local community leaders was still strong, but on the verge of transitioning as these individuals moved into retirement. Over the years, from the 1980s through the 1990s, I was a member of a couple of different guard units that were located in several small communities within that same region. It was apparent to me, and evident in our recruiting efforts among local community and school leaders, those individuals with military experience in the business and civic arena was steadily declining. This gradual decline continued into the early decades of 2000. I became even more aware of this negative trend with the emergence of an issue concerning the support of a local National Guard unit. This issue dealt specifically with renewing an armory lease agreement with the local school board in the joint-use facility in my home town.

I was asked, as a past commander of the local unit and former resident of that community, to visit with the local community leaders and National Guard unit. My purpose was to generate

support for a new armory contract and to generate momentum for our local recruiting efforts. I was amazed to find that the majority of the business and civic leaders were from my age group and that most of them did not have any personal military experience. Their understanding of the importance of a National Guard unit within that community for state and federal missions was not as evident as it had been in the previous generation of community leaders with military experience. This lack of sensitivity to military issues and manpower requirements presented a challenge. This challenge was one of educating community leaders on the economic impact of the National Guard to that community, as well as the benefits that it provided to the state in support of natural disasters and community projects. The importance of the National Guard's federal mission, supporting the nation during times of war, was also explained as a key reason for supporting the unit, the new rental contract and the need for new recruits. Most of the community and its leaders were aware of the tradition of the National Guard unit within that community, but that did not automatically generate wide public support on these issues. The common link or thread of military support was starting to disappear from the community.

The local traditions of the military were still preserved by current and retired National Guard members within that community and by the local American Legion, but these small vestiges of the tradition were not enough. The all-volunteer force, over the last 30 years, had not created or sustained the military participation required to rejuvenate the loss of military experience within local civilian leaders. Therefore, the local community tradition, established after WWII, of proactively supporting the National Guard as a needed institution within that community was eroding.

This very real and personal experience of the erosion of support, gives rise to the question; what will the support of the military look like in this and other communities, across the nation, in another 30 years? Department of Veteran Affairs statistics dated 30 September, 2004 list the current number of living veterans at 16,522,400 out of an estimated United States population in 2004 of 293,655,404. The WWII and Korean living veteran population statistic in 1953 was 21,372,921 out of an estimated United States population of 163,026,000¹¹ This is a nation wide reduction of the veteran population from about 13% to 5.6% from 1953 through 2004. This significant reduction of over half of the veteran population within society and my own personal experience illustrates, to some degree, that military service and civilian life are becoming disconnected because of this erosion. Strategic military leaders must evaluate these cultural changes within our society, envision their impact on future manpower resources, and devise solutions to reverse the very negative trend.

The decline of state and national political leaders with military experience in both the legislative and executive branch of government should also be of major concern for strategic military leaders because this also reflects a major culture change. As the Congressional Research Service (CRS) report for Congress illustrates, there is a significant trend in the decline of military experience in Congress.

Military Service

According to the Military Officers Association of America, there are 141 Members of the 109th Congress who have had some form of military service. The House has 110; the Senate 31. They have served in World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and Kosovo, and during times of peace, as well as in the Reserves and the National Guard. As noted above, one Senator is a former Secretary of the Navy. The number of veterans in the 109th Congress is 13 fewer than the 108th Congress and 14 fewer than in the 107th Congress showing the recent trend of a steady decline in the number of Members who have served in the military. This may be attributed in part to the end of the Selective Service System draft in 1973.¹²

Professor Gregory Foster, of the National Defense University, states that these civilian leaders who lack military experience “have shown commensurately little faculty for critical discernment in military matters. Having further been consistently less than adroit in the larger conduct of international affairs, they have failed to engender the minimal credibility necessary to compensate for their military illiteracy.”¹³ One would suspect that the steady decline of military experience in Congress will cause it to be less sensitive and more disconnected from the needs of the military.

Current AVF recruiting efforts emphasize great bonuses and educational benefits. These incentives do not lure enough Americans from the different social class levels. If the AVF military recruiting emphasis remains at the middle and lower class Americans, then we can assume that just as the military service in the Congress continues to decline, then so will it decline in other key areas of society. Can the military culture continue this downward trend of not having individuals with military experience in all facets of society? The National will to support the military with recruits may be in serious jeopardy if society does not feel that military service is an important component of adult life and citizenship in this country.

In a recent article, Maj. General Michael D. Rochelle, then commander of the Army Recruiting Command, commented that influencers (coaches, teachers, guidance counselors, and parents) were the biggest challenge in recruiting this “Millennium Generation” to serve in the military.¹⁴ It is apparent from these comments that a culture shift away from supporting the military has already taken place in our society. The AVF has not mobilized or recruited enough

of its members from across the social classes and cultures to ensure that the burdens of defending this nation are understood by society as a whole. On a recent tour of the National Archives in Washington D.C., I happened to view some WWII era video footage of Bob Hope and Jimmy Stewart giving a recruiting pitch for young Americans to join the military in support of the War effort. It was apparent from these video clips that key Hollywood figures used their influence to support the military. Many also served within the armed forces. A 1998 population representation report compiled by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management Policy), which used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS), also found that, among high school students, having a parent who served in the military significantly raised enlistment probabilities. The report also shows that between 1982 and 2000 the number of 18 year olds with veteran parents will decline by more than 50% and it is also projected to decline another 50% by the year 2018.¹⁵ Military leaders may have to envision their future without enough supportive influencers in all areas of society, and especially in the political arena, if the recruiting efforts stay focused on filling an AVF.

If we are to reverse this trend of a widening culture gap, then this nation must take another look at mandatory national service as the means to achieve this reversal. If the information provided in this article does not provide enough reasoning to support the existence of a culture gap between the military and society, then no action should be taken. On the other hand, if there is enough convincing information to argue the case that a culture gap may exist, and its existence will have an impact on the Nation's will to support the military, then a new national service program should be developed to address the issue.

Recommendation

A new mandatory national service policy should be initiated that supports both military service and civilian programs such as the Peace Corp and AmeriCorps. Inside the Army, the 15-Month Army Enlistment Option (AEO), announced by United States Army Recruiting Command, is indeed a great start along this path. In this program, applicants will incur an eight-year obligation period. The obligation plan requires fifteen months of active duty, after completion of basic training and advance individual training, followed by 24 months of satisfactory participation as an active drilling member of the National Guard or Army Reserves. Soldiers then have the options of serving the remainder of the eight year total obligation in one of three ways: 1) as an active member of Army Reserve or National Guard 2) in the Individual Ready Reserve or 3) as a member of a National Service Program designated by the Secretary of Defense (such as AmeriCorps or the Peace Corps)¹⁶ This type of service program, if it were

a mandatory national service program, would provide young Americans with a better understanding of the military as an institution within society. These national service programs would also underscore the significance of service to one's community.

In order to capitalize on the limited assets of the United States, however, some additional options should be added to the AOE program. One such option would allow soldiers, who have completed approximately four years of their eight-year obligation, to apply for Student Programs within the Department of State. These programs include internships, fellowships, cooperative education, a stay in school program, and summer clerical programs. Individuals, accepted and transferred into the program, would fulfill their remaining service contract by serving the nation within this department. This assignment will provide the individual with job experience and the chance to further their education within the career fields of the Department of State. This type of program should also provide incentives for letting the employees be both a member of the National Guard/Reserves and the Department of State. A dual-hatted work force, that has an understanding of both cultures, could further help eliminate internal organizational barriers that impede communication and understanding.

Another option that could be added to this AEO program would be to allow individuals to join the Citizen Corps. This agency was designed to promote homeland security at the local level and to prepare communities against the threat of terrorism. The National Strategy for Homeland Security document, dated 16 July 2002, challenges individual Americans to be part of the homeland security strategy. A mandatory national service program, that has this option in it, would indeed inject the Citizen Corps program with a continuous manpower flow that would enable it to eventually cover all communities. As a result, there could be qualified individuals in many locations who would continue to serve, on a volunteer basis, once their original obligations have been fulfilled. This type of workforce would provide continuity of effort for four key programs that are being promoted as a part of Citizen Corps: the Neighborhood Watch Program, Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA), Community Response Team (CERT), Volunteers in Police Service, and the Medical Reserve Corps administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Formalizing this later arrangement could ostensibly yield even further benefits. Participants in this program could also be trained to know the basic security requirements and intelligence needs of law enforcement. Resource constrained law enforcement and intelligence agencies could then combine these community assets into their intelligence gathering network. In times of limited resources, this type of collaborative effort would prove effective at increasing the United States' homeland security. Additionally, individuals involved in this type of national

community service would be positioned to foster an American culture of citizenship, service and responsibility. This in-depth community involvement would bring together local leaders, citizen volunteers, and the local network of first responder organizations. Trained and educated citizens, working together in these vital areas, will make communities better prepared to respond to emergencies, crime, and terrorism. These sensitized individuals would also be better “recruiters” for DoD and the “National Service” program in general.

If this recommendation was adopted, then it would be necessary to establish a regulatory commission in order to ensure its success. The Commission would develop options on the structure, management, training, and progression of individuals within this Citizen Corp program. This program could also be further expanded and developed to accommodate the following list of suggestions:

1. Homeland security units could be established, within the Citizen Corps, to address the unique security requirements of each state. For example, military police type units could be organized and trained to help with border patrol, immigration, inspections, and airport and transit security. Likewise, medical units could be equipped and trained to deal with mass casualty incidents. These units would be employed in a support role in accordance with defined statutory authority.
2. State control of these types of units would allow Governors to utilize these assets in support of each state Department of Homeland Security or Emergency Management office.
3. Governors play an important role in utilizing these units to coordinate and support the Volunteer Citizen Corps council network in local communities and tribes. Units could partner with these councils to educate the public about program benefits and help recruit new members. Units should also look at developing joint training programs with local responders within their geographic area. This interaction will develop key working relationships and procedures that can be beneficial in a time of crisis.
4. These units could also be used for emergency response and disaster support during state and national incidents. In addition, some of these units could be trained to provide secondary mission support, such as fire fighting or riot control just as the National Guard does now.
5. Management and training of these units could be assigned to the National Guard of each state. The Army National Guard is present in more than 2,800 communities in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Therefore, some current National Guard facilities, structure, and equipment assets

could be utilized for administration and training purposes. This would prevent new buildings from being constructed, thus eliminating additional spending. In order to successfully manage and/or train these civilian units, however, increased National Guard fulltime support personnel would be needed to support the additional structure and requirements.

6. The U.S. Army has just made worldwide accessible, no cost foreign-language training available to all Active Army, National Guard, Reservists, and Department of Army civilian personnel through a distributed learning system. The Army's goal to have soldiers with foreign language skills could also be reinforced by this AEO program. Significant additional monetary incentives could be provided to individuals who possess or acquire foreign language skills that are needed by the military. Furthermore, language skills testing and validation could become a part of the entrance requirements needed by individuals that choose the above proposed options of joining the Department of State, Peace Corp, or Citizen Corps. Individuals that leave the service with these language skills would also be an extremely valuable asset within the private sector as the economy grows internationally.
7. A new ready reserve program. A new ready reserve program would need to be developed and established that best utilizes this resource for homeland security requirements. Specific education requirements, training programs, and incentives could be developed to keep members trained and ready for employment on specific federal or state missions. Also, a tiered or phased training program could be established that would allow individuals to be swiftly integrated back into combat ready units. This type of potential would give the Department of Homeland Security and Defense the ability to support continuous operations for a major conflict, disaster, or emergency.

This type of program could effectively reduce the cost of securing America while simultaneously educating future community leaders at the state and local level on security principles and incident response. Individuals that have completed the military and Citizen Corps program would become valuable assets for employment in the private sector. Employers could utilize this experience within their organizations to better conduct programs that meet the intent of the National Strategy for Homeland Security. This can only result in better private sector risk assessments for at risk facilities and assets. It can also pave the way for a synchronized approach with local governments on systems or processes to protect these key assets.

A mandatory national service program would not eliminate the need for enlistment incentives, educational incentive programs at the state and federal level, quality of life programs, and retention bonuses. Eliminating, or drastically cutting, such incentives would adversely affect the ability of military recruiting and retention programs to attract and retain individuals for the services. This is a lesson that was learned during the transition from the draft to the all-volunteer Army. Quality of life issues and pay benefits were increased so that soldiers would find Army pay and other compensation competitive with the civilian sector. These programs increase the likelihood that high quality individuals, from all segments of society, will consider the military as a lifetime career choice. "A U.S. Army recruiting study showed that linking federal aid to some form of national service would boost military enlistments as well as civilian service¹⁷.

Individuals that have gone through this type of a modified national service program and have chosen to return to the private sector can provide the nation a qualified human resource that could be called upon in case of a national emergency. This resource is vital, since the nation's available manpower for service will continue to decline as the average age of Americans increases. The U.S. Census Bureau's projected demographic data indicates that the 5-44 year age group will decrease from 58.6% of the total U.S. population in the year 2000 down to 51.9% in the year 2020. During that same time frame, the 45 and above year old age group will increase from 34.5% in the year 2000 to 41.2% of the total U.S. population.¹⁸

Congress will also need to look at leveraging other federal programs in order to better support a mandatory national service program. Indeed, a major obstacle to military recruitment is the substantial amount of federal aid already given to college students. We [the United States] now annually spend over \$20 billion on grants and loan subsidies to college students.¹⁹ Combining federal aid funds and current military recruiting dollars into a mandatory service program, that entitles members to a participation bonus, student loan repayment program, and education allowance package should provide adequate monetary compensation for those involved. The current AEO obligation plan requires fifteen months of active duty after completion of basic advance individual training. The AEO could be changed to allow individuals attending college or vocational schools to complete this requirement upon graduation. This type of integrated federal aid program, along with changes to the AEO, would help the military solve its under representation of college graduates in the enlisted ranks. Integrated incentives could also provide the high quality soldiers needed to perform in our technically challenging, transformation oriented military services.

The U.S. military needs to be a reflection of the diverse elements of the population of this country. Marybeth Peterson Ulrich, Associate Professor of Government in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the Army War College, focuses this thought. She states in her article (subject) that in order “to fulfill its primary obligation to its client (society), the military must be granted by society the legitimacy to carry out its solemn function. Legitimacy is enhanced when the military institution is perceived to be ‘of society’ in terms of being comprised of a representative cross section of the population. The alternative is to increasingly become a distinct group representing only limited characteristics and attitudes of the society at large.”²⁰ The nonpartisanship effect of this mandatory national service program would be in keeping with the military’s tradition of political neutrality. Marybeth Peterson Ulrich also states that “the American military at present needs to reinforce the professional norm that it can serve any political party in a principled fashion.”²¹ The new AEO program and mandatory service requirement would reinforce that ethical norm in military organizations and national service programs. This nonpartisan effect could further improve and sustain relationships that foster a cultural climate and process for effective interoperability of multiple agencies.

Conclusion

It is essential that military and government leaders take an in-depth look at and perform a critical analysis of the strategic impact of supporting the AVF concept as it relates to creating a negative culture gap between the military and civilian society. This culture gap may have a significant impact on the nation’s will to meet future manpower requirements for the military. Several examples of the Nation’s will were identified in this paper, including support from local community leaders, political leaders and veteran organizations. A new mandatory military service policy, one without deferments, should be required for all eligible young Americans. Military and political leaders must transform this strategic conceptual policy into a practical and concrete program to ensure that Americans, from all levels of society, are required to serve in their nations’ military. Federal aid and recruitment programs should be leveraged to best support bonuses, incentives, and educational aid programs within this new policy.²² A combined military and National Service Program can provide better education and career opportunities for individuals over the required obligation period. This combination of programs should strengthen both organizations with quality participants that are adequately compensated. The character building quality of this type of National Service experience will do much to educate subsequent generations on the importance of social responsibility and community

involvement. A National Service experience has the potential to bridge the growing culture gap between the military and civilian society at all social levels across this nation.

Endnotes

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